

BUDGET PHILOSOPHY AND PROCESS

Budget Philosophy

Serving the public trust requires that the annual budget provide the best possible balance of allocation to meet the varied needs of all citizens. The budget is a principal management tool for the City administration, and in allocating the City's resources, it both reflects and defines the annual work program. In this context, the budget provides a framework for us to accomplish our mission, which is "to create, enhance, and preserve a human, natural, physical, and economic environment which fosters our community's unique quality of life". The budget should also reflect our core City organization values of integrity, teamwork, service excellence, personal growth, and innovation.

In addition to balancing allocations to meet community needs, and incorporating our mission and core values, a successful annual budget preparation process requires excellent communications, citizen outreach, and a commitment to excellence. To this end, the process must be a cooperative effort of the entire City organization.

Boulder prides itself on being a progressive community, willing to challenge the status quo and being on the "cutting edge". City staff has accepted this challenge by developing the budget within the context of a search for creative solutions for the delivery of City services. The budget will emphasize measures to improve the productivity and effectiveness of service delivery to citizens. Teamwork and efficiency enhancements will limit the amount of bureaucratic "red tape" required, both between functional areas within the City, and between City staff and citizens. The overriding goals must be to support the high standards set by the community, and to provide long-term value at reasonable cost.

The budget will be based upon timely, consistent and clearly articulated policies. It will be realistic and will include adequate resources to meet assigned work programs. Once adopted, within the parameters of policy guidelines, departments will be given full spending authority for their budget(s).

Budget Process

The fiscal year of the City is the calendar year. The City has implemented a two-year budget process and adopts a biennial budget by December 1st of the year prior to the two-year budget period. Even though the budget is adopted for a two-year term, the State and City Charter require that prior to each fiscal year, an appropriation ordinance must be adopted to authorize budgeted expenditures for the coming fiscal year.

The City of Boulder Charter establishes the time limits pertaining to the adoption of the budget. The budget process and schedule of development is designed to fit within the Charter mandate and to allow for active and early participation by the City Council, with an emphasis on public input.

The City's budget is developed over a ten month period, beginning in February and ending in October/November.

In February, staff began the development of five year revenue projections along with preliminary cost projections. In May, Council is updated on the proposed budget. At this time, policy issues are presented and Council has the opportunity to provide direction for consideration by the City Manager in the development of the proposed budget. Then staff compiles all the necessary information in the budget guideline manual that provides the basis for the development of each department's budget. Departments begin developing their detailed budgets in May/June with review by boards and/or commissions where appropriate.

The City Manager reviews departmental budgets in June/July and meets with the Directors Group as needed to discuss the proposals submitted by departments.

activities can be provided either to outside parties (enterprise funds) or to other departments or agencies primarily within the government (internal service funds). The City applies all applicable FASB pronouncements issued prior to November 30, 1989, and GASB statements since that date in accounting and reporting for its proprietary operations.

Fiduciary funds are used to account for assets held on behalf of outside parties, including other governments, or on behalf of other funds within the government. When these assets are held under the terms of a formal trust agreement, a pension trust fund must be used. Agency funds generally are used to account for assets that the government holds on behalf of others as their agent.

Fund Definitions

General Fund

The General Fund is established to account for the revenues and expenditures necessary to carry out basic governmental activities of the City such as public safety, recreation, planning, legal services, administrative services, etc, which are not required to be accounted for in another fund.

Special Revenue Funds

Special Revenue Funds are established to account for the proceeds of specific revenue sources (other than special assessments, pension trusts, proprietary fund operations and revenues received for major capital projects) that are legally restricted for specific purposes. The City of Boulder has the following special revenue funds.

Capital Development Fund - to account for development fee proceeds to be utilized for the acquisition, construction and improvement of facilities necessary to maintain the current level of public amenities such as police, fire, library, human services, municipal offices, streets, and parks and recreation.

Lottery Fund - to account for State Conservation Trust Fund proceeds to be utilized for the refurbishment, capital improvement and debt service on park acquisitions.

Planning & Development Services Fund - to account for revenues and expenditures related to development and building services functions.

Affordable Housing Fund - to account for cash in lieu financial contributions from developers and General Fund contributions which are to be used to construct, purchase and maintain permanently affordable housing units in Boulder.

Community Housing Assistance Program (CHAP) Fund - to account for property tax, a housing excise tax and fees to be used to increase the supply of affordable housing in Boulder.

.15 Cent Sales Tax Fund - to account for earmarked sales tax authorized by the voters in 1992 for parks and recreation and general municipal purposes.

.25 Cent Sales Tax Fund - to account for earmarked sales tax authorized by the voters in 1995 for parks and recreation operating and capital needs.

Public Safety Property and Sales Tax Fund - to account for earmarked sales and property tax authorized by the voters in 1997 for public safety purposes.

Library Fund - to account for the operations of the City-owned library and branches. Financing is provided by general property taxes and General Fund contributions.

Parks and Recreation Revenue Fund - to account for revenues and expenditures related to the provision of recreation, reservoir and golf course services/programs.

Open Space Fund - to account for the acquisition and maintenance of greenbelt land. Financing is provided by sales taxes and the issuance of long-term bonds and notes payable.

Airport Fund - to account for the operations of the City-owned municipal airport. Financing is provided by grants, rents and leases.

Transportation Fund - to account for construction, operation and maintenance of all major thoroughfares, local streets, bikeways, walkways and City-owned parking. Financing is provided by sales taxes, the City's share of the County Road and Bridge tax, State Highway Users' tax and State Auto Registration fees.

Transportation Development Fund - to account for development fees to be utilized for the construction of transportation capital improvements related to new development and growth.

Community Development Block Grant Fund - to account for the funds granted by the Community Development Block Grant program administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

HOME Fund - to account for funds granted by the HOME program administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Capital Project Funds

The Capital Project Funds are established to account for financial resources to be utilized for acquisition, construction and improvement of general fixed assets (other than those financed by Proprietary Funds).

The City of Boulder has the following Capital Project Funds:

- .25 Cent Sales Tax Bond Proceeds Fund
- Permanent Parks and Recreation Fund
- Boulder Municipal Property Authority Bond Fund

Debt Service Fund

The Debt Service Funds are established to accumulate moneys for payment of general long-term debt principal and interest.

General Obligation Debt Service Fund - Financing is provided by investments accumulated for the retirement of specific notes payable.

.15 Cent Sales Tax Debt Service Fund - Financing is provided by earmarked sales tax.

Boulder Municipal Property Authority Debt Service Fund - Financing is provided by base rentals from the General Fund, Lottery Fund, Open Space Fund and the Permanent Parks and Recreation Fund.

Enterprise Funds

Enterprise Funds are established to finance and account for the acquisition, operation and maintenance of governmental facilities and services which are entirely or predominantly self-supporting by user charges. All activities necessary to provide such services are accounted for in these funds, including, but not limited to, administration, operations, maintenance, financing and related debt service, and billing collections.

The City of Boulder has the following Enterprise Funds:

- Water Utility Fund
- Wastewater Utility Fund
- Flood Control Utility Fund

Central Area General Improvement District
University Hill General Improvement District

Internal Service Funds

The Internal Service Funds are established to finance and account for services and/or commodities required by other funds. The City of Boulder has the following Internal Service Funds:

Telecommunications Fund - to account for the costs of operating, acquiring and maintaining telecommunications equipment used by all City departments.

Property & Casualty Insurance Fund - to account for and facilitate the monitoring of the City's self-insured property & casualty insurance plan.

Workers Compensation Insurance Fund - to account for and facilitate the monitoring of the City's self-insured workers compensation plan.

Employee Benefit Insurance Fund - to account for and facilitate the monitoring of the City's minimum premium funding arrangement (similar to self-insurance) for health and dental insurance.

Compensated Absences - to account for payments of compensated absences to employees of the General and Library Funds. Funding is received primarily from the General Fund.

Fleet Fund - to account for the costs of operating, acquiring and maintaining automotive equipment used by other City departments. Such costs are billed to the other departments.

Computer Replacement Fund - to account for the costs of acquiring and maintaining computer equipment used by other City departments. Such costs are billed to the other departments.

Equipment Replacement Fund - to account for the costs of acquiring equipment used by other City departments. Such costs are billed to the other departments.

Facility Renovation & Replacement Fund - to account for the costs of maintaining and replacing facilities within the City of Boulder.

Budget Basis.

Budgets are adopted on a basis consistent with generally accepted accounting principles. The City budgets revenues and expenditures/expenses for all funds except Internal Service Funds and Fiduciary Funds.

The budgets of general government fund types (i.e., the General Fund or Special Revenue Funds) are prepared on a modified accrual basis. Briefly, this means that obligations of the City (i.e., outstanding purchase orders) are budgeted as expenditures, but revenues are recognized only when they are measurable and available. "Measurable" means the amount of the transaction can be determined and "available" means collectible within the current period or soon enough thereafter to be used to pay liabilities of the current period.

The accrual basis of accounting is utilized by proprietary fund types (i.e., the Water Utility, Wastewater Utility and Flood Control Utility Funds). Under this method, revenues are recorded when earned and expenses are recorded at the time liabilities are incurred.

Budget Terms

Accrual Basis - The basis of accounting under which revenues and expenses are recognized when they occur, rather than when collected or paid.

Ad Valorem Tax - Tax based on the Assessed Valuation of property.

Appropriation - Legal authorization granted by City Council to make expenditures and incur obligations up to a specific dollar amount.

Appropriation Ordinance - An ordinance by means of which appropriations are given legal effect. It is the method by which the expenditure side of the annual budget is enacted into law by the City Council.

Assessed Valuation - Basis for determining property taxes. The assessor determines the assessed valuation of residential real property. For 1999-2000, property was appraised at the 1998 actual value. The residential rate for 1999 was 9.74% of its actual 1998 value and all other property was assessed at 29%.

Bond - Written promise to pay a specified sum of money, called the face value or principal, at a specified date or dates in the future, called the maturity date(s), together with periodic interest at a specified rate.

Budget - Plan of financial operation, embodying an estimate of proposed expenditures for a given period and the proposed revenue estimates of financing them. Upon approval by City Council, the budget appropriation ordinance is the legal basis for expenditures in the budget year.

Capital Assets - Assets of significant value and having a useful life of several years. Capital assets are also referred to as fixed assets.

Capital Improvement Program - An annual, updated plan of capital expenditures for public facilities and infrastructure (buildings, streets, etc.) with estimated costs, sources of funding and timing of work over a five year period.

Capital Project - Projects involving the purchase or construction of capital assets. Often a capital project encompasses the purchase of land and the construction of a building or facility, or major street construction or reconstruction. Design, engineering or architectural fees are often a part of a capital project.

Capital Purchases - Those items which a department purchases that have a value of over \$5,000 and a life of longer than one year, with the exception of computing equipment and copy machines which have a limit of \$1,000.

Debt Service - Payment of principal and interest related to long-term debt.

Department - An organizational unit of the city which provides one or more services.

Depreciation - Expiration in the service life of fixed assets, attributable to wear and tear, deterioration, action of the physical elements, inadequacy and obsolescence.

Designated Fund Balance - That portion of the fund balance that has been set aside for a specific purpose by the City Council.

Division - A group of related tasks to provide a specific benefit to either the general public or the city organization. A division is a sub-organizational unit of the department.

Encumbrance - Appropriations committed by contract for goods or services, which will not be paid for until the next fiscal year.

Fiscal Year - A 12-month period to which the annual operating budget applies and at the end of which a government determines its financial position and the results of its operations. The City of Boulder's fiscal year is January 1 through December 31.

Fund Balance - The balance remaining in a fund after costs have been subtracted from revenues.

General Obligation Bonds - Bonds which the full faith and credit of the issuing government are pledged for payment.

Grants - Contributions or gifts of cash or other assets from another government to be used or expended for a specified purpose or activity.

Home Rule - Statutory and constitutional provisions, which allow municipalities to exercise powers of local self-government such as the administration and collection of local taxes. The City of Boulder is a home rule municipality.

Infrastructure - Facilities on which the continuance and growth of a community depend, such as streets, waterlines, etc.

Interdepartmental Charges - Charges for services provided by the Interdepartmental Service Funds. An example of these charges is vehicle charges. These charges are reflected as expenditures in the department budgets and as revenues in the Intradepartmental Service Funds.

Internal Transfers - Legally authorized intra-city transfers from a fund receiving revenue to another fund where it is to be expended. Revenue and expenditures are accounted for in both funds.

Lease-Purchase Agreements - Contractual agreements which are termed "leases", but which in substance amount to purchase contracts, for equipment and machinery.

Long-term Debt - Debt with a maturity of more than one year after the date of issuance.

Maturity - The date on which the principal or stated value of investments or debt obligations are due and may be reclaimed.

Mill Levy - Rate applied to Assessed Valuation of property to determine property taxes. A mill is 1/10th of a penny, or \$1.00 of tax for each \$1,000 of assessed valuation. The city's maximum mill levy, excluding debt service, is thirteen mills per City Charter.

Modified Accrual Basis - Revenues are recorded as the amount becomes measurable and available. Expenditures are recorded when the liability is incurred.

Not Operating Budget - Represents the amount of money necessary to provide for the day to day functions of city government. It does not include internal transfers between funds, nor does it include expenditures for debt service and capital projects.

Operating Expenses - Those items that a department will utilize in its daily operations. Examples of these items would be copying, office supplies, postage, work supplies, and chemicals. In addition, any item that a department receives from outside agencies such as telephone services, gas and electric charges, equipment rentals, rent, advertising, and contractual arrangements are also included in operating expenses.

Personnel Services - This category includes salary and benefits for standard and temporary employees. It also includes budgeted overtime.

Plant Investment Fees - Charges to new developers for connecting to the city's water or sewer system to compensate the city for additional facilities needed to serve the development.

Program - A specific activity within a department. A grouping of programs typically defines a division within a department.

Projected - Estimation of revenues and expenditures based on past trends, current economic conditions and future financial forecasts.

Reserves - Funds which are planned to not be spent in the current budget year, and whose level is established by a specific policy decision. Please refer to specific reserve policies in this document.

Revised Budget - Most recent estimate of revenue and expenditures including additional appropriations made throughout the year and encumbrances carried over.

Special Assessment - A levy made against certain properties to defray part or all of the cost of a specific improvement or service deemed to primarily benefit those properties.

Supplemental Requests - Programs and services which departments would like to have added to their budget. Typically, supplemental requests are covered by additional revenue, as is the case with new grants.

Unallocated Fund Balances - Unspent funds whose levels at any point in time are the difference between expected revenues plus any unspent funds from prior years, and budgeted expenditures. The primary conceptual difference between unallocated fund balances and reserves is that reserves are earmarked by conscious policy decisions, and unallocated fund balances are funds which remain above the reserve.

User Fees - The payment of a fee for direct receipt of a public service by the party benefiting from the service.